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THE HANDLING OF SHEEP ON THE
NATIONAL FORESTS

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THE HANDLING OF SHEEP ON THE NATIONAL FORESTS

LA MANIPULACION DE LAS OVEJAS EN LOS BOSQUES NACIONALES



WASHINGTON
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
1920



U. S. Forest Service

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INTRODUCTION.

The information contained in this book has been prepared by officers of the United States Forest Service at the request of the sheep owners who graze their sheep within the National Forests. It is important, both to the man who hires you and to yourself that you read this book carefully, keep it with you for reference from day to day, and do your very best to handle the sheep in your charge according to the instructions given herein.

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U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

THE NATIONAL FORESTS.

The National Forests are the property of the United States Government. They were created for two purposes. One is the production of timber; the other, the regulation of streamflow by maintaining a normal growth of trees, shrubs, grasses, and weeds. The grazing of live stock is regulated on the National Forests for the primary purpose of protecting the forests and watersheds, secondarily, because the Government recognized the grass as a valuable resource which should be protected and made to produce the maximum amount of animal food for the benefit of the stockmen, as well as all of the people.

Forest and watershed protection must be accomplished by regulated grazing. This means that the total number of stock upon the National Forests must not be greater than the range will properly support and that the grazing seasons must conform to the cycle of plant growth. The latter is necessary because the removal of the forage too early will result in weakening the parent plant and prevent the production of fertile seed, thus making it possible for the plants which are not good feed to take the place of those which are removed by live stock before they have a chance to grow and mature seed.

The number of stock which a forest range permanently will support will depend almost altogether upon the methods of handling the stock on the range. If sheep are properly handled they will make better gains and do less damage to the range than if they are improperly handled.

For five years the Forest Service carried on experiments on one of the National Forests, to determine the difference in the growth and weight of lambs and in the amount of range required for sheep grazed in a pasture, as compared with sheep herded on forest range of exactly the same kind. It was found that the sheep in the pasture required from 25 to 40 per cent less range, depending upon the seasonal growth of forage, than was needed for the sheep which were herded on the open range outside the pasture. It was also found that the lambs in the pasture weighed on an average of 8 pounds more than the lambs in the band which was herded on the open range. The sheep in both bands were of exactly the same age and same grade. Further experiments proved that if sheep are allowed to graze openly, instead of being bunched up and herded close together; if they are bedded where night overtakes them, instead of being driven back to the same bed ground night after night; if they are allowed to go to water two or three times each week, instead of being driven to water every day whether they are thirsty or not; if dogs are not allowed to disturb the sheep while they are feeding or finding a suitable bedding place; in other

words, if the sheep are permitted to graze with the greatest possible freedom that can be allowed without danger of loss from straying and wild animals, almost the same results can be secured as if they were in a pasture. Losses from coyotes, as a rule, will also be much less than when sheep are returned to the same bed ground for several nights in succession.

The Forest Service wishes to make the National Forest ranges produce year after year the greatest possible amount of mutton, beef, wool, and hides. If the annual production is to be kept up the stock must be so handled as not to injure forage plant growth, except to feed off the annual crop. When stock are not handled carefully they damage the range. If they are shaded day after day in the same place on the creek bottoms they soon kill out all plant growth and nothing but dust or gravel beds remain. The Forest Service can not allow such injury to the range and in such cases must prohibit further grazing on such areas until the plant growth is restored. In closing such areas to grazing, the allotment is of course reduced in size and the number allowed on the forest for the sheepman on whose range the damage is done must be cut down. This works to the disadvantage of both the owner and the herder. The fewer sheep the owner has on the forest, the less money he makes. The fewer bands the owner can put on the forest range the fewer jobs for herders.

Ordinarily the best herder brings in the best lambs; the fattest lambs come from the bands which are handled best. The less sheep are driven and run about the fatter they will get. Every time a herder puts the dog on the sheep he is running off just so much mutton. In Idaho, in Utah, in Wyoming sheep are not dogged to water. Water is just as plentiful here, and when the sheep get thirsty they will go to water themselves. When a herder dogs his sheep to water he runs just so much mutton off and the sheep tramp out a large amount of feed.

The ideas which have been found to result in fatter lambs and better range elsewhere in the West are given herewith.

Do not drive your sheep, especially with dogs, any more than you absolutely have to. Start them out in the morning slowly and then let them feed undisturbed. Keep your eye on the leaders and if they trail too fast check them. Plan on feeding toward shade, away from the creeks, for the warm part of the day during hot weather. If they shade up leave them alone. Do not force them down to water. Thousands of sheep in the West on ranges much drier than those on the National Forests are not watered oftener than every three or four days. In some parts of the West sheep are not watered for weeks at a time.

Don't use the dog on the sheep unless you have to. Even a pig would not get fat if he was constantly chased by dogs. Keep your dog for a companion and to give warning of the presence of predatory animals.

Look over your range ahead of the sheep and plan how you are going to use it. Figure out about what day you will want your sheep to be on water and allow them to graze toward it so that they will arrive at the time you wish them to get there. Take your new piece of range on the way out from water; not on the way in. Sheep should not be allowed to come to water over a new piece of range. They tramp out too much feed.

If you allow the sheep to feed quietly and do not dog them they will not need water as often as if they are constantly driven about and the less they travel the more fat they will put on. On the average they lose more fat in being driven to water than the water puts on. If left to themselves sheep do very little damage to the range by tramping. If you let your sheep tramp out the range your allotment will have to be cut down and the driving will keep your lambs thin.

Move your bed up to the place you figure your sheep will reach in the evening. As evening comes on circle your band quietly, turning the stragglers into the bed ground. Do not drive your sheep to a bed ground. Bed them where night overtakes them. Bedding in one place too often damages the range and this will mean that the forest ranger will have to close this piece of range and cut down your number of sheep.

Ordinarily an hour on the creek is plenty for all sheep to water. Do not stay longer. Your sheep will tramp

out the feed and you will lose your range.

The ranger wants to be your friend. It is his job to see that you handle your sheep so they do not damage the range. He will help you with advice and suggestions if you wish him to. If you herd your sheep properly he will have the supervisor give you a card of thanks and recommendation stating that you are a good herder. If you do not handle your sheep properly he will have to report to the supervisor that you are a poor herder. If you are given a card of recommendation—keep it. Whenever you want a job herding sheep show the card. Your Government card will show everyone that you are a good herder and will help you get a job anywhere.

Following are the main points to be kept in mind:

1. Use your dog just as little as possible.

2. The less you drive your sheep the fatter the lambs.

3. When you must take your sheep to water, allow them to graze in and do not use the same trail all the time.

4. Feed to water over range already used. Save your new range for feeding out from water.

5. The use of one bed ground more than three times will mean a 10 per cent cut in your number of sheep.

6. Do not shade on the creeks. An hour on the creek is enough for watering the sheep.

7. Keep your best range with the nearest water for the hottest part of the summer.

8. Help prevent 'forest' fires.
9. Keep the streams pure—the mountains clean.
10. If you do not understand, ask the ranger.

GREAT FIRES FROM LITTLE CAMP FIRES GROW.

Remember.—The period which you spend on the National Forest ranges with your stock is the dry season, when there is extreme danger to the timber, forage, and watershed values from destruction by fire. Help to protect and save these values by being *careful with your camp fires.*

You do not want the stock under your care to come out in poor condition at the end of the season because the best part of the feed upon your range has been burned off, nor do you want to have a lot of hard work holding the stock on the short range you will have left if a fire gets away from you.

You do not want to give the impression that the grazing of live stock on the National Forests works injury to the forest lands, or that stockmen and their employees have no regard for the public interest. You do not want to subject yourself to the trouble, expense, and humiliation of arrest because of carelessness in leaving a fire burn unattended.

Avoid all these difficulties by observing the following simple rules: *Do not* leave your camp fires burning when you are absent. Build them in *safe places* in the open. *Thoroughly ex-*

tinguish them with water and bury them with earth when you leave.

Many costly fires have been started by a lighted match, cigarette stub, or pipe duffel carelessly dropped in dry material to smoulder along until the winds fanned it into flames. Be careful.

You can furnish a fine example of good citizenship and public spirit by putting out any small fires you may discover, and reporting any smoke you see to the nearest forest officer.

BEWARE DISEASE.

The carcasses of animals that die close to streams must be removed at once and buried or burned. The Forest Service has made this rule to keep our streams pure and protect persons drinking water from the streams from getting disease by drinking impure water. The carcasses of animals that die from contagious disease must be burned. If an animal dies from an infectious disease, such as blackleg, anthrax, glanders, etc., the germs remain in the dead body, and other healthy stock may catch the disease if they are near it. Some of your own herd may die by catching disease in this way. The best way to burn a carcass is to dig a hole about 2 feet deep and big enough to hold it, then make several small ditches sloping into the hole. This will make a draft and your fire will burn much better. Next pile wood in the hole, roll the carcass onto the pile and burn it. The dirt which was taken from the hole can be

thrown back to cover up what is left of the carcass.

SALTING.

Place your salt where the forest ranger tells you to. He wants you to put it where it will do your stock the most good and keep the range in the best condition. Do not salt along streams or at the watering places, or any place where the stock naturally congregate. Place the salt where stock will have to travel from water and the best feed to get it. They will thus avoid trampling out of the choice range and pick up lots of good feed that would otherwise go to waste.

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ANNALS

La Manipulación de las Ovejas en los Bosques Nacionales.

LA INTRODUCCIÓN.

Los oficiales del Servicio de los Bosques de los Estados Unidos han preparado este libro á petición de los dueños, las ovejas de quien pastan en los bosques Nacionales. Es importante al hombre que le alquila á Vd. y á Vd. mismo que Vd. lee cuidadosamente este libro. Guárdela contigo para referencia de día en día. Esmérese a manipular las ovejas que son en la custodia de Vd. según las instrucciones aquí dentro.

LOS BOSQUES NACIONALES.

Los bosques Nacionales son la propiedad del gobierno de los Estados Unidos. Tienen dos propósitos. Uno es la producción del bosque; el otro, la regulación de la corriente del río por mantener una producción normal de los árboles, los arbustos, las hierbas y los hierbajos. El pasto del ganado se regula en los Bosques Nacionales para proteger los bosques, el pasto y el agua. Secundariamente, porque las hierbas son un recurso valeroso. El Gobierno reconoció que el pasto es un medio precioso que se debe proteger. Debe producir la cantidad máxima de ali-

mento para el beneficio de los ganaderos y de los pueblos.

La protección de los bosques, el pasto y agua se deben proteger por pasto regular. El número total de los ganados en los Bosques Nacionales no debe ser más que el pasto puede mantener y la estación debe conformar a la acrecencia de las plantas.

Esté es necesario porque la remoción del forraje demasiado temprano resultará en debilitar la planta materna y impedir la producción de la semilla fértil. Así las plantas que no son buen alimento pueden suceder las plantas que son removidas por las ganaderías antes que pueden crecer y mandurar las semillas.

El número de ganado que una extensión de pasto sostendrá permanentemente depende del método de manipular el ganado en la extensión de pasto. Si las ovejas se manipulan propiamente harán ganancias mejores y harán menos daño al pasto que si se manipulan impropriamente.

Hace cinco años el Servicio de los bosques mantiene los experimentos con los Bosques Nacionales para determinar las diferencias en la acrecencia y el peso de los borreguitos y en la cantidad de pasto que las ovejas necesitan para pastar en un pasto cercado como las ovejas que comen en la misma clase de pasto abierto. Se halló que los borreguitos necesitan de veinte y cinco a cuarenta por ciento menos extensión de pasto conforme al crecimiento del forraje que se necesitaba para las ovejas que se reunió en hatos en un pasto libre. Se halló también que las ovejas en el pasto cercado pesaron

ocho libras más que las ovejas en hatos que se reunió en un pasto libre. Las ovejas de los dos tuvieron la misma edad y fueron del mismo grado. Experimentos, además, demuestran que si las ovejas se permiten pastar dispersas en lugar de hatos compactos, se majadan cuando es de noche en lugar de ser rechazadas á la misma región para dormir todas las noches, si se permiten ir a beber dos o tres veces por la semana en lugar de ser impelidas al agua todos los días que tienen sed que no tenga sed si los perros no se permiten turbar las ovejas cuando comen o buscan buen espacio para dormir, y en efecto si las ovejas se permiten pastar con la máxima libertad que puede ser sin riesgo de destrucción por los animales salvajes y de descarriar, casi las mismas resultas se obtendrán como se estuvieran en un pasto. La destrucción por los coyotes ordinariamente serán menos que si las ovejas vengán al mismo espacio para dormir todas las noches.

El Servicio de los Bosques quiere que los bosques nacionales producen todos los años la máxima cantidad de carne de carnero, de carne de vaca, de lana, y de cueros, etcétera, todos los años. Para conservar la producción anual, el ganado se debe llevar á pastar de manero que no dañe la producción de las plantas á excepción de dar la producción anual. Si Vd. no manipula el ganado cuidadosamente dañaran el pasto. Si van debajo de los árboles todos los días en el mismo espacio en el fondo del riacho destruirán todas las plantas y nada quedara

El oficial quiere ser un amigo de Vd. Es su obra á ver que Vd. manipula bien sus ovejas, y no daña el pasto. Le asistirá á Vd. con aviso y sugerencias si lo quiere. Si Vd. reuna el ganado en hatos propiamente una carta de gracias le hará dar á Vd. por el inspector y una recomendación que dice que Vd. es un pastor bueno. Si Vd. no manipula sus ovejas propiamente informará el inspector que Vd. es mal pastor. Si una tarjeta se le da á Vd. guardela. Cuando Vd. quiere una obra de reunir el ganado en hatos mostrará la tarjeta. Su tarjeta mostrará a todas las personas que Vd. es pastor bueno y le asistirá obtener un empleo en todas partes.

Acuérdese estas puntas.

I. No debe usar mucho el perro.

II. Sus ovejas engordarán si no se impelen mucho.

III. Cuando van las ovejas al agua no use el mismo camino cada vez.

IV. Cuando las ovejas van á agua no se debe usar el pasto ya usado. El pasto nuevo se debe guardar.

V. El uso de la misma majada más que tres ó cuatro veces significa diez por ciento menos en su número de ovejas.

VI. No debe permitir que las ovejas vayan á los árboles que están en el riachuelo. Una hora en la banda del río es bastante para dar de beber al ganado.

VII. El pasto que se debe guardar debe tener agua por la parte más caliente del verano.

VIII. Ayude Vd. á precaver los incendios de bosques.

IX. Conserve Vd. la limpieza de los riachuelos, y la hermosura de los montes.

X. Si no comprende pregunte al oficial.

LOS INCENDIOS GRANDES DE LOS PEQUEÑOS FUEGOS PROCEDEN.

¡Aviso! El período que Vd. pasa en los pastos de los Bosques Nacionales es la sazón más árida del año. Extremo es el riesgo de la destrucción por los incendios de los árboles, del forraje, y de los cursos de agua. Ayude Vd. á defender y á conservar estas ventajas por *cuidado con el fuego*.

¿Quiere Vd. que el ganado que es en su custodia llegue al fin del sazón en condición inferior á causa de incendio del forraje?

¿Quiere Vd. mucho trabajo arduo á retener el ganado en los pastos insuficientes que resultarán si Vd. permita el fuego á escapar?

¿Quiere Vd. que se crean que el apacentamiento del ganado en los Bosques Nacionales daña los terrenos arbolados, o que los ganaderos y sus empleados no tienen consideración por el bien del público?

¿Quiere Vd. exponerse a la pena, los gustos, y la mortificación de arresto á causa de negligencia en dejando descuidado un fuego?

Evite Vd. todas estas dificultades con seguir estas reglas simples:

No deje Vd. arder sus fuegos cuando Vd. sea ausente.

Construyalos Vd. en sitios seguros, á campo raso.

Apagelos Vd. á fondo con agua y cubralos Vd. con suelo cuando Vd. marche.

Muchos incendios calamitosos han traído su origen de pajuelas encendidas ó de puntas de cigarillos, ó de las cenizas de pipas, que han sido echadas descuidadamente en material seco. Estos incendios han ardido lentamente hasta que los vientos han aventadolas en llamas. ¡Cuidado!

Vd. puede dar buen ejemplo de la ciudadanía patriótica con apagar cualesquiera incendios pequeños Vd. encuentre, y con dar noticia de cualquier humo al próximo oficial de los bosques.

GUÁRDESE VD. DE LA PESTILENCIA.

Los muertos de los animales que mueran cerca de los riachuelos se deben desviar sin retardo, para enterrar ó quemarlos. El Servicio de los Bosques ha establecido esta regla á fin de guardar la limpieza de nuestros riachuelos y de defender la gente de pestilencia á causa de beber agua impuro. Se deben quemar los muertos de los animales que mueran de la pestilencia. Cuando un animal muere de infección, lo que la morriña negra, el ántrax, ó el muermo, etc., los microbios persisten en el muerto, y el ganado sano puede inficionarse si acercase. Unos de su propio hato pueden morir de tal infección. El óptimo modo de quemar un muerto es como sigue:

En primer lugar, cave Vd. un hoyo de dos piés de profundidad y bastante

largo. Después, haga Vd. algunas cortas zanjás, inclinadas hacia el hoyo. Esto hara un corriente de aire de suerte que su fuego ardera más bien. Después, apile Vd. leña seca en el hoyo, rode Vd. el muerto sobre la hoguera, y quemelo. El suelo llevado fuera del hoyo se puede volver sobre los restos del muerto.

EL SURTIMIENTO DE SAL.

Ponga Vd. su sal dondequiera que el Guardamonte ordene. Él quiere Vd. pongalo donde en sumo grado beneficiará su ganado de Vd., sin dañar el pasto. No ponga Vd. la sal cerca de los riachuelos ni a los aguaderos, ni donde juntese naturalmente el ganado. Pongalo Vd. en tal lugares que el ganado este precisado á andar afuera del agua y del pasto más bueno. De este modo evitará hollar el pasto excelente y cogerá mucho pasto bueno que por otra parte se gastaría.



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